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REMARKS AS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY BY
ATTORNEY GENERAL ERIC HOLDER AT THE
ST. PETERSBURG INTERNATIONAL LEGAL FORUM

ST. PETERSBURG, RUSSIA

It is a pleasure to be here today – and to bring greetings from President Obama and the American people. And it is a privilege to join with so many distinguished leaders and essential partners – from across and far beyond Russia – to discuss the goals, values, and responsibilities that we share.

As Russia begins a new chapter in its rich and remarkable history, I want to thank Prime Minister Medvedev for welcoming me to this beautiful country – and for taking part in today’s discussion. Let me also thank Director Piotrovskiy and Minister Konovalov for their work in organizing this important forum – and helping to advance the critical dialogue that many of you started here in St. Petersburg last year.

Since its earliest days, this city has been a center of culture and commerce; of revolution and innovation, of political activism and social advancement. Today, I am hopeful – and confident – that St. Petersburg will serve as a meeting ground for thoughtful, respectful discussion; and that this gathering will be a starting point for a new level of international cooperation.

In times like these – of urgent threats, ongoing war, and uncommon legal challenges – such cooperation is essential. And I am grateful that, during my tenure as Attorney General over the last three years, I have had the opportunity to help forge and strengthen key international alliances – and to work closely with many of the leaders in this room.

Thanks to our colleagues and counterparts worldwide, America’s international law enforcement relationships have never been stronger. And I’m especially proud of what we’ve accomplished in reestablishing and reinforcing ties between Russia and the United States. Over the last two decades – and, especially, in recent years –our nations have found new ways to work together – in common cause, in good faith, and with mutual respect – not only to turn the page on past divisions, but also to build a brighter, more secure future – and a safer world.

Our government leaders and law enforcement officials have worked together to identify and dismantle transnational organized crime networks, illegal human trafficking rings, and global financial fraud schemes. We’ve made meaningful strides in combating gang violence, cybercrime, intellectual property theft, government corruption, and child exploitation. And as we’ve bolstered

our joint crime-fighting efforts, we've also opened new channels for communication and cooperation in upholding the rule of law, and protecting essential civil rights.

From my vantage point, it's clear that the 21st century will be shaped by how well we build on this progress; and, in a very real sense, by what happens here in this nation. Today, Russia is not just the largest country on the planet – it is an influential player on the world stage. As a member of the U.N. Security Council, Middle East Quartet, P5+1, Six Party Talks, G-8, G-20, and soon the World Trade Organization – Russia has assumed a prominent and pivotal role in addressing today's most urgent and complex global challenges. Without question, Russia's security and prosperity, the health of its people and the strength of its civil society, will have a direct and profound impact on the world's communities and on the advancement of human rights and human progress.

That's why the United States – and so many partner nations – are committed not only to a strong and prosperous Russia – but to what such an achievement helps to ensure: enhanced global security, more robust and resilient global markets, and a thriving global community – one that reflects and honors the sacred and fortifying values of fairness, tolerance, inclusion, opportunity, and justice for all people – no matter who they are, where they're from, what they look like, or how they worship.

I realize, of course, that this vision may be ambitious – but these goals are not beyond our reach. And achieving them depends on what we do today – on the paths forward that we establish, and on the partnerships we forge, reaffirm, and prioritize.

Although each of these issues will be discussed more specifically during this forum, I want to point out two specific areas where I believe the bonds of partnership – between every country represented here today – can and must be strengthened, and where America's support will continue: in combating global terrorism and international crime; and in promoting good governance and the rule of law.

First of all, because opportunity and prosperity cannot be realized without security, the United States will continue to direct every resource and tool at our command – from diplomatic and military tactics, to our courts and intelligence capabilities – to defeat the global terror network. In protecting our people and defending our allies, we will respect the sovereignty of nations, as well as the rule of law. And we will strive to engage more nations in this vital work.

Second, we will strengthen current efforts to promote good governance and effective law enforcement, and to combat and prevent the costs and consequences of public corruption. This work is essential in creating the conditions for economic growth and modernization. As we've seen in nations large and small, rich and poor, young and old – when corruption takes hold, political institutions tend to lose legitimacy – threatening democratic stability and the rule of law. Corruption undermines the health of international markets, stifling competition and repelling foreign investment. And, as we've learned, corruption often is a “gateway crime” – one that allows money laundering, gang violence, terrorism and other crimes to thrive.

The U.S. government – and the Department of Justice that I am privileged to lead – have long recognized corruption as a transnational problem. And I know firsthand that combating it is no easy task. More than 35 years ago, I began my legal career prosecuting public corruption cases in the Justice Department's Public Integrity Section. So, I understand how difficult this struggle can be. As many countries – including both the United States and Russia – have learned, beating back

corruption requires a fundamental shift – in the way business leaders and public officials conduct and think of themselves, and in the way law enforcement operates. But I also know that such fundamental shifts can happen.

For example, in the United States, we have made great strides in recent years. From our robust enforcement of the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act, to the landmark Kleptocracy Asset Recovery Initiative – which we launched two years ago to target and recover the proceeds of foreign official corruption that have been laundered into or through the U.S. – we are continually making strides in our fight against corruption at home, and in our efforts to help foreign countries increase their anti-corruption enforcement capacity. In fact, over the last two decades – in partnership with the U.S. Department of State, and at the request of host nations – the Justice Department’s Criminal Division has placed legal advisors in dozens of countries around the world, including Russia, to participate in developing and sustaining these institutions.

We’ve seen clearly that prosecution is not the only effective way to curb global corruption; and that we must also work with business leaders to encourage, ensure, and enforce sound corporate governance. Above all, we’ve discovered – and proven – that meaningful, measurable progress is possible; and that we should not, and must not, settle for anything less.

In each of these areas – and in our ongoing work to promote global security and good governance – I want to point out that the United States intends to serve, not as a patron but as a partner – as a collaborator, not a monitor. I also want to reiterate something that President Obama said shortly after taking office, when he visited the New Economic School in Moscow. In describing the key pillars of a successful democracy, he acknowledged that, “By no means is America perfect. But it is our commitment to certain universal values which allows us to correct our imperfections, to improve constantly, and to grow stronger over time.”

For the American people – and for the United States government – this commitment is stronger than ever. But the challenges we face demand that this commitment be shared – across jurisdictions, borders, oceans, and across areas of disagreement and division.

If we remain committed – and engaged – I have no doubt about our ability to transform this extraordinary moment of possibility into a new era of progress – marked by greater peace and unity, freedom and prosperity, and opportunity and justice for all.

Thank you.

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